

Hydration LA

By Martin Brady

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Climate change turns California into the Independent Water Republic of California. By the last remaining coastline beyond the growing deserts lies the shrinking Green Zone where the billionaires have retreated with their water processors. Beyond the high walls are the deserts where the Desert Rats fight for existence driving over dunes of sand where towns once thrived.

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Pop Quiz

In the vast California desert the two female Desert Punks Petrol and Booster talked about their options.

They had stopped their desert dune buggy on the top of a sand dune .

Outside it was 60 degrees Celsius and the sand dunes lay on top of what had once been homesteads in California until the water had run out.

As the saying went : once the water ran out - the government ran out.

Then the temperatures soared and the dreamy California life turned into a dust bowl nightmare.

Sand dunes covered everything except in the green zones near the sea where the water processors were.

This was where the remaining military and billionaires retreated to when anarchy started and the coast line was a military no go zone.

USA was gone after the Water Wars and all that were left were Independent Water Republics when the climate changed.

"Pop quiz," said Petrol.

"Go," replied Booster.

They wore Divinity Bracelets and had a picture of their daughter Smoothie on the dashboard.

Booster checked the bullets in her gun.

"You only have five litres of water. Your car runs on water. If you drive your car to the green zone you'll die of thirst first. If you drink the water you'll die in the dunes. What do you do?" asked Petrol.

"I'd put the water in the car and take my chances," replied Booster, straightening her punk hair.

"I'd drink the water," replied Petrol, "and walk by night."

"Also," said Petrol. "Your daughter has been kidnapped by the Order of the Knights of Water and brought to the Green Zone. You're worried about her and she needs your help."

Booster checked the bullets in her gun.

"Not looking good," said Booster.

"This is exactly our situation," replied Petrol.

They both looked at one another and thought for a while.

In the distance in the haze of the California desert that stretched for hundreds of miles they saw the

new Americans dressed as Arabs with their Camels and water and food supplies.

Petrol and Booster knew what to do.

They loaded up their rocket launcher and weapons and prepared to attack the passing convoy.

"SMOOTHIE WE'RE COMING BABY!!" screamed Petrol as she sped across the California in her armor plated buggy and started firing shells at the traders.

Desert Rats

On the outskirts of the Green Zone Petrol and Booster arrived in Desert Rat city.

"Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!!" said the town announcer.

"Get the water back from your dead. We offer competitive rates," he said.

Behind him was a queue of people with their dead.

The bodies were placed in a dehydrator machine and their water extracted.

Booster and Petrol walked past it to the Souk where everything was sold.

They bought a bag of dried Rattle Snakes and Spicy Scorpion Tails.

A shady water seller appeared in front of them.

He wore a trench coat and opened it.

"Need some water?" he asked.

He showed them different sized bottles.

Booster took one and looked at it.

Small particles of dirt swirled in the yellow grime.

"I know you," said Petrol.

"You used to be on the TV," she said. "Before the upheaval."

"No," he said looking nervous.

Booster took out her gun.

"You know it's a crime to sell your piss," said Booster and threw the bottle back at the man.

"It's good for you, I saw a TV show on it," he replied nervously and put the bottle back in his pocket.

Booster and Petrol took out their guns and pointed them at the man.

"What's your name?"

"Lemon Jenkins," he said nervously.

"What did you do before this?" asked Petrol. She pulled the trigger back on her gun.

"I was..." He swallowed hard. "I was a lobbyist in DC."

"Lobbying against what?" asked Booster.

"Climate change," he said and took a drink of his own piss.

"You need to get into the green zone?" he asked. He smiled and his teeth were yellow. "I know how to get in. I still got friends in high places."

Smoothie

Deep inside the Green Zone Smoothie accompanied her assigned protector family The Wangs as they went to Church.

She wore an explosive neck chain which looked like a piece of neck jewellery that would blow Smoothies head neatly off her shoulders if she stepped out of line.

Christianity was no longer popular and instead people in the Green Zone worshipped the God of Water Aquaratus.

The half-human half-water nymph God spouted clean water as they entered the Church of Aquaratus.

Smoothie joined the family looking after the billionaire Wu children and their teenage daughter Chow. Bo and Bik also played rock, paper, scissors but Smoothie told them to stop.

The service began.

Preacher Simki spoke up. "Good people of the Green Zone, we are gathered here today to pay homage to Aquaratus who has bestowed us with clean water to stave us of our thirst." He closed his hands together and lowered his head. "Amen."

"Amen," replied the parishioners.

All around them in the Church clean water rolled down the walls, keeping the building cool from the boiling temperatures.

Smoothie said nothing but got an elbow in the ribs from Chow.

"Amen," grumbled Smoothie.

The Order Of The Knights Of Water

Grand Master of the Order of the Knights of Water Theo Bouteille Le Grande stood in front of the management committee of the Independent Water Republic of California.

A map was shown of the West cost of what had once been called USA.

Now it was the Independent Water Republic of California.

Gigantic barriers with troops on top were in place to keep back the approaching California desert and Desert Punks.

On one side was desert and the people known as the Desert Punks and on the other side was the Green Zone where the water from the sea was processed and the remains of civilization.

Between the two lay the Grand Master and his formidable mercenary Army.

Out at sea were ageing Super Carriers which had been sent to invade the Republic of Ireland and create a Transatlantic Water Line.

"It rains there a lot," explained the Grand Master. "Yeah, really a lot." He thought about the rain some more and proceeded. "Our invasion force was successful and the pipe is being prepared as we speak. We will initially ship the water back on Super Water Carriers."

The committee clapped.

"We're also rounding up young desert Punks and they have been collared and will look after our citizens. Last week we raided the Desert Rat city and brought back five hundred young desert Punks who will no longer be a drain on our defence perimeter."

He prepared his final slide.

"And now for the Super Weapon demonstration," explained Theo.

A young desert Punk was brought into the room and placed by a wall.

Then a Knight pointed the weapon and nodded.

A beam of energy hit the Desert Punk who screamed and he was turned into ninety per cent pure water.

"There we have it ladies and gentleman. This is the weapon that will solve the Desert Punk problem and our water problem in one go."

The committee stood up and applauded.

Lemon Jenkins

It was dark and Petrol, Booster and Lemon had tried to get into the Green Zone using a secret entrance he knew about.

However the plan had not worked and they were chased by drones who fired shells and bullets at them.

"I THOUGHT YOU HAD FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES!" screamed Petrol as she fired back at the drones.

"I LIED!!" shouted Lemon as he ran away from the gunfire.

Wife Number One

It was Chow's nineteenth Birthday and Smoothie prepared all the food and then later cleaned up.

"Come here," said Chow.

Smoothie walked over to her and Chow gave her a divinity ring.

"Put it on," said Chow.

"I don't want to be your wife," said Smoothie.

Chow took out the remote control for the exploding button.

"Put it on or I press the button, you will be my first wife. I can have four more. You will keep the house clean and carry my babies, understood?!" said Chow. She pointed at Smoothie in a bossy fashion.

Reluctantly Smoothie put on the divinity ring.

Later she went into her room and started to cry.

"Moms where are you?" she whispered to herself, placing her face briefly into her pillow.

The Sand Is Coming

Ageing Nobel Laureate Nathan Swiss was pouring over the data from the climate satellites when the Chairman of Defences came into his office on the eight floor of the government building.

The frail scientist had produced climate prediction models that were used the world over since the planet had heated up uncontrollably.

"What is the meaning of this document?" asked General Gunther Kippisen.

"It's my climate change prediction for the Green Zone. What we have is two systems which are out of equilibrium with one another," said Nathan who was widely acknowledged to be a genius. "The sand is in a probabilistic war with the remaining arable land. I have modelled the result for equilibrium."

Gunther snorted. "You have predicted that the Green Zone will become desert."

Nathan looked up. "Yes, this is what the model predicts."

The general grimaced some more. "Because of the Green House gases from the Sea Water converters."

"Good," said Nathan. "You read it."

"I am not happy," replied Gunther. "That water keeps our citizens alive and produces our food. Without it we are all dead. You might have well called this document. You're F-cked."

Nathan stirred his green tea. "I do research and I produce results. I leave it up to others to calculate the effects on society."

"If you publish this there will be anarchy," said the general.

"Well then don't publish it," said Nathan.

"I have a better idea," replied the General.

"What is that?" asked Nathan.

The general nodded to his two men who walked over to Nathan.

"What are you doing?" asked Nathan. The frail old man seemed scared.

"I'm going to conduct an experiment," he said. "I'm going to see if you can fly."

The two Knights of the Order of Water picked up Nathan and threw him out the window.

The old man screamed as he fell.

The General then looked to the Knights.

"Burn it all," said the general, "and organize a suicide note. I'm tired of life blah, blah, blah."

United Colors Flag

In the Independent Water Republic of California the politicians and the mercenary joined together under the new flag of the country which was made up of the colors of the rainbow complemented by various sprinkles.

They all stood underneath it and smiled broadly.

"Our recent referendum allowing all couples of any type to have up to five partners has been a huge success. The world has looked in at us and said - That couldn't happen here. This shows how modern we have become," beamed Leader Smiles Dressman. "We are an incredible open society and everyone should come here and try out our five partner program."

Smiles showed off his five partners which included a bearded lady, a WADVC male Wrestler, a tiny transgender man called Ikesy who was missing half a nose and two Chinese figure skaters. However it was rumored that he also had many other partners but the press didn't like to pry because it was rude.

"We're going to have a big party this week called - We're so amazing living here, this weekend. EVERYONE IS INVITED!!" said Smiles.

"What about reports that the Sand is coming over the perimeter wall President Smiles and water supplies are running low?" asked a foreign reporter.

However the President disappeared into the party hall.

"You have to leave now," said a Knight of the Order of Water and issued the reporter with an Undesirables Certificate. He was driven to the nearest deportation centre.

Hundreds and Thousands

Chow brought Smoothie to Hundreds and Thousands, the best Genetic Engineering shop in the Green Zone.

"We're shopping for our designer baby today," said Chow. "Aren't you excited?" she asked.

Smoothie feigned a smile. "Yes."

They met the sales Rep and were presented with their designer baby choices.

"Twins or just a single?" asked the Rep.

"Twins!!" said Chow clapping her hands together.

"Who will carry?" asked the Rep.

"She will," pointed Chow, sipping her cocktail.

Smoothie nodded and exhaled slowly.

Chow opened the user interface and began choosing the traits she wanted the twins to have.

"What you think?" asked Chow.

"I like it," replied Smoothie expressionlessly.

"And this?" she asked again.

"I like it," she said again.

"I like your attitude, I think I might keep you after the babies are born!!" said Chow.

"Thank you," replied Smoothie.

"THIS IS SOOO EXCITING!!" she said as she made her designer baby.

The Supreme Leader

After they picked their designer baby Chow ordered Smoothie to meet the Supreme Leader for The Blessing of Aquarticus.

They waited outside the greeting room. "You may enter," said the receptionist.

Smoothie walked towards the front door but guards stood in her way.

They pointed at what looked like adult sized dog flaps in the walls.

"Use the flaps," said the receptionist.

One at a time, Smoothie and Chow crawled into the Supreme Leader's chambers.

"You may stand," said the Supreme Leader when they both crawled into a room that looked strangely like his bedroom.

Smoothie stood up and looked at the walls of the bedroom that had simple hand drawn paintings on the walls.

The pictures had simple messages.

LONG HAIR IS GOOD

WEAR GLASSES WHEN YOU READ

WATER IS GOOD FOR YOUR SKIN

BRUSH YOUR TEETH

The Supreme Leader of the Water Republic of California sat in his bed dressed in white pyjamas with his wife Wanandonly Drawings.

She snuggled into the Supreme Leader who had a long beard and long hair.

Behind him was a picture of Aquarticus with the word Aquarticus under it.

They looked at the Supreme Leader who was eating pancakes with his wife.

"What do you two want?" asked The Supreme Leader.

"We are looking for your blessing," said Chow. Smoothie looked at Wanandonly who looked strangely like Chow.

"You got it," he replied. "You want some pancakes?" asked the Supreme Leader.

He offered them some and they tried out the Banana pancakes.

"You're new here," said the Supreme Leader to Smoothie.

She nodded as she ate some pancakes.

"You have any questions for the Supreme Leader?" he said to her.

"Is everybody nuts here?" asked Smoothie as she ate her pancake.

The Supreme Leader shuffled in his bed and thought about the answer.

"Just grow your hair long, that's all that matters," he replied and he ate some more pancakes, straightening his round rimmed spectacles.

"These are really good!" said Chow as Wanandonly fed her some pancakes like she was her kid.

The Water Taster

The Remaining Free Press numbering a dirty dozen reporters of the water republic of California walked up a hill to the sewage plant with hundreds of politicians.

To alleviate the water shortage, processed sewage water would be piped into the water system this week.

President Smiles listened to the water scientist and made a speech about the great work done.

Unexpectedly the scientist offered Smiles a glass of the water.

Smiles just smiled at the scientist and chuckled.

Everyone else laughed as well.

Smiles refused to move his hands to take the glass of recycled sewage water.

The twelve cameras zoomed in on the two men.

Smiles thought for a minute and then spoke up.

"Bring out the water taster," said Smiles.

The chief adviser whispered into Smiles' ear.

"We don't have one."

Smiles looked disappointed that there wasn't one.

"We should appoint one very soon," said Smiles and they all moved on.

Burbank

"Future wife," said Chow.

"What?" asked Smoothie. The big society wedding would be happening soon. Daddy Chow would pay for it all.

"It's time for me to buy you a Burbank," said Chow. "All the ladies about town have one."

Chow brought Smoothie to the store known as Burbank.

Under it was the motto: Best Californian Burkhas.

They met the girl who was dressing in head to toe in her Burbank.

"How may I help you?" she asked.

They could not see her face behind her silk Burbank.

"My future wife to be is here for her first Burbank!" said Chow.

"How exciting!!" said the sales assistant and they brought Smoothie into the changing room.

Burbanks had become very popular since the average daily temperature hit fifty degrees celcius. The Independent Water republic of California preferred Celcius because it made more sense to them.

Smoothie tried out her Burbank which was a Burkha that had built in Social Networking and was Wireless enabled.

Fighter pilot technology was also used so that Smoothie could see everyone around her even though she was covered head to toe in the Burkha. She could even look down at the ground outside. All the technology was built into the Burbank.

Better still the Burbank was temperature controlled and Chow's face appeared on a holo-screen.

"Hello future wife!!" said Chow. "What do you think??" she asked.

"This is AMAZING!" replied Smoothie. "I LOVE IT!!"

The face of the sales assistance appeared. "They're also very popular in France."

"I'll take it!" said Smoothie.

The Wedding

On the day of the wedding, the two brides walked up the isle together.

Smoothie and Chow stood opposite one another.

The Priest of Aquaraticus talked about the meaning of marriage and then asked them had they any words to share?

"I need to tell you something Smoothie," said Chow.

"What?" asked Smoothie.

Chow took out the remote control for the explosive device and pressed the button.

Everyone in the Church ducked but nothing happened.

"The exploding necklace is full of sugar. I could never hurt you," said Chow all luvvy duvvy.

The crowd all went: Aaaaah.

Some even cried.

"Then why did you pretend you were going to blow my head off my shoulders?" asked Smoothie.

Smoothie was also feeling a little emotional and so was Chow.

"I'm just really, really shy Smoothie and I just needed some way to get to know you. So I told you I could blow your head off your shoulders so we could become a couple." Chow began to cry.

Smoothie did as well.

"So do you still want to marry me?" asked Chow.

The crowd in the Church gasped waiting for her answer.

However before Smoothie could answer, Booster and Petrol burst through the windows of the Church on ropes.

They had their weapons on their backs and landed on the floor at the back of the Church.

"Smooooooooothieeeeeeeeeee!" said Booster.

"Babyeeeeeeeeee!" screamed Petrol.

Smoothie turned around and looked at her Moms.

"Moooooooooooooooooooooooo!" shouted Smoothie.

At the back of the Church, the Wedding Organizer trotted over to Booster and Petrol and gave them a booklet for the service.

"Please sit up at the top and on the right," suggested the Wedding Organizer. "Do you have any special dietary requirements?"

Lemon Jenkins walked into the Church and sat down. "I do," said Lemon brushing the dirt off him. "Fresh water."<

The End